

THE MELFORD RURAL DISTRICT.

In the Administrative County of West Suffolk.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health, for 1903.

(Pursuant to the Regulations of the Local Government Board and of the West Suffolk County Council.)

Population 1891, 14456 ; 1901, 13121. Area, 49765 acres. Number of persons per acre, 0.27.

Number of Parishes 21. Number of inhabited houses, 13121. Number of persons per house, 4.1. Geological formation, chalk, covered on the higher ground with Boulder Clay, and in the valleys with drift sand and gravel or brick earth. Superficially with alluvium.

The following vital statistics have been compiled from the monthly returns sent to me from the different Registrars in the District :—

1. THE BIRTHS. The number of births registered during the year was 278 equivalent to a birth-rate of 21.2 per 1000 of the population. The births and birth-rates in this district during the past seven years were :—

	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.
Births	315	344	347	286	315	288	278
Birth-rate	21.8	23.7	24.0	19.7	23.8	21.8	21.2

These figures show that the great decline in the birth-rate still continues. About ten years ago the average was always 27 or 28 per 1000.

The Birth Rate for 1903 in Rural England and Wales, was 27.3

THE DEATHS. The number of deaths from all causes registered during the year was 161, to which have to be added 13 deaths of persons belonging to the district in Sudbury Workhouse, making the total deaths 174, equivalent to a death-rate of 13.2 per 1000. The deaths and death-rate for the past seven years were as follows :—

	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.
Deaths registered	160	209	227	205	186	190	161
Deaths belonging to the District	174	229	246	221	200	206	174
Death rate	12.0	15.1	17.0	15.2	14.1	15.7	13.2

The Death Rate for 1903 in Rural England and Wales, was 14.8.

Chiefly owing to the absence of serious zymotic diseases the death-rate has been lower than the average of the past six years. The following table shows the relative age mortality :—

Deaths	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 65	over 65
Under 1 year.	years.	years.	years.	years.	years.
22	9	4	6	46	87

Infant Mortality. Generally this is a test of the sanitary condition of the district, and it is gratifying to observe that during the last few years the deaths among infants have been declining. The following is the record for the past seven years :—

	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.
Deaths of children under one year	35	49	40	34	27	30	22
Rate per 1000 of births registered	111.1	142.3	115.2	118.8	85.9	89.2	79.1

The Infant Mortality for 1903 in Rural England and Wales was 118.0.

Deaths from Zymotic Diseases. These numbered 7, viz. :—Whooping Cough 2, Diphtheria and Croup 2, Measles 1, Influenza 2.

For the past seven years the zymotic death rate was as follows :—

	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.	1903.
	0.10	1.05	1.05	1.31	0.6	1.0	0.5

The Zymotic Death Rate for 1903 in Rural England and Wales, was 1.1.

The deaths from Phthisis were 13 or 0.9 per 1000. The deaths from Cancer were 16, or 1.2 per 1000. This is about the average mortality from these two diseases in this district.

THE INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFICATION. The total number of cases notified in the district during the year was 41 or 3.1 per 1000 of the population. The notifications for the past seven years were as follows :—

	Smallpox.	Scarlet Fever.	Diphtheria and Croup.	Typhoid Fever.	Puerperal Fever.	Erysipelas.	Total cases.	Per thousand population.
1897	0	50	7	2	4	16	79	5.4
1898	0	30	8	2	2	14	56	3.8
1899	0	53	7	1 simple	3	19	83	5.7
1900	0	7	8	2	1	15	33	2.2
1901	0	15	13	5 1 (cont.)	0	10	43	3.2
1902	0	16	5	1	1	8 chkn pox	23	2.5
1903	0	24	6	0 2 (cont.)	0	9	41	3.1

The following are particulars of the occurrence of these diseases and other zymotics not notifiable :—

Small Pox. Most fortunately we have again escaped a visitation of this disease, though cases occurred in close proximity to the district. No doubt the general re-vaccination which took place during the panic of 1902 prevented any alarm taking place this year.

Scarlet Fever. Twenty-four cases were notified, affecting twelve families in eight parishes and spread over the year. The type was mild and no fatality occurred; the origin was in all cases due to being imported, except in two instances where the source of infection could not be traced. One of these cases proved very inconvenient, being the assistant teacher of the Alpheton school, who resided with her aunt, the schoolmistress, on the premises. The aunt had to nurse the niece, so that on consultation with the managers the only safe course was adopted, to close the school, which was done on March 17th until after the Easter holidays. Disinfectants with carbolic oil and printed instructions were distributed, and at the proper time the houses were disinfected with formalin. In no instance was there any spread of the disease from the families affected.

Diphtheria. Six cases were notified, occurring in four families in different parishes and at different times of the year. There were two deaths, one of these in the parish of Gt. Waldingfield, a child of three years. A younger child in the same house was affected but recovered. In Gt. Cornard two children comprising the family were attacked, the earlier case died.

In the first instance the origin was probably due to the insanitary state of an enclosed space round the house where numerous fowls were kept. In the second case no fowls were kept. The house was on low lying ground and damp, otherwise free of collections of decomposing animal and vegetable matter. Of the other two cases, one was imported, and the other a very mild attack, three other children in the cottage escaping. Antitoxin supplied by this Council was used in each case, and when early injected proved most efficacious. With the two fatal cases the disease had too far advanced before medically attended.

Continued Fever. The two cases notified occurred with children in Cavendish. There were no typhoid symptoms or any insanitary conditions to account for the illness.

Influenza. The epidemic form of this disease was not marked, though several isolated cases occurred, with two deaths.

Whooping Cough. This disease was so prevalent in the parish of Stoke-by-Nayland that the managers, on my advice, closed the school from January 26th to February 17th. Other parishes affected were Assington and Newton. No fatalities occurred.

Measles. During the spring this disease was prevalent in the parish of Gt. Cornard, having spread from the Sudbury Urban District. One death occurred. The infant department of the Board School had to be closed on March 30th until after the Easter holidays.

Chicken Pox. This disease appeared in several parishes, but only in that of Newton to the extent of an epidemic, where it was necessary to close the school for four weeks from the 27th January.

WATER SUPPLY. At the beginning of the year the deficient rainfall of the preceding year had seriously reduced the stand of water in the wells and ponds throughout the district. This, however, was fully compensated for by the unprecedented rainfall of this year, which amounted to 31½ inches, being ten inches above the average of the last few years.

Five new wells were sunk during the year. Three of these were for new houses, and for which certificates of wholesome supply were granted. A new well 55 feet deep was sunk for 10 cottages in the parish of Bures, to replace an old defective well which had run dry.

In the parish of Shimpling a new supply for the village was made by public subscription, making use of a spring of good water and running it into a dipping place.

Eight wells in which the water was found to be more or less impure were satisfactorily improved by being deepened and cleaned out, and surroundings attended to. Analysis was made of 27 samples of water, of these 16 were found to be fit for domestic use, and 11 were condemned as impure. Ten of these were remedied, and one is used only for slopping purposes.

SEWERS AND SEWAGE. No new sewers were made this year. One at Bures was repaired. Five ditches, into which sewage flows were cleaned out, viz., three in Melford and one each in Cavendish and Stoke. A new drain for 30 houses is intended to be made in Melford, where it is much required.

HOUSES. Nine new houses were erected and inspected. Six houses were reported as unfit for human habitation two of these were closed and four were pulled down. On the site of three of the latter a new house was erected.

Four cases of overcrowding were reported; these were abated.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS. The factory and Workshop Act, 1901, came into force on January 1st last year, and imposes several new duties and powers on the District Councils and their Officers. These have mainly to do with the sanitation of Factories, Workshops, Workplaces, and also of out or home workers of certain kinds. It also imposes the duty of obliging all Factories and Workshops employing more than 40 people to have reasonable provision made in respect of safety from fire.

Factories. 3. These were inspected, and all have now made reasonable provision in respect of escapes in case of fire.

Workshops and Workplaces. Of these there are 60 on the register, including 29 bakehouses. These are kept in accordance with their respective regulations and orders. Any sanitary defects observed were remedied.

Outworkers. The lists received show 28 in the district, the dwellings of which have been visited and found satisfactory.

No notices were received from H.M. Inspector of Factories and Workshops.

Appended is a tabular report of inspections made in the various parishes.

GENERAL SANITATION. Systematic inspections have been made in each parish during the year, as well as special inspections when required. These include the dairies, cowshed and slaughter houses. Any sanitary defects to which attention was directed were attended to and remedied. Legal proceedings were taken in two cases. In one an order was made; in the other the case was dismissed, on the ground that a defective roof, which was required to be repaired, was not a structural convenience. Section 94 Public Health Act, 1875.

No further movement has been made with respect to providing an Isolation Hospital.

Tabular statements, according to the forms supplied by the Local Government Board, of sickness and mortality within the districts are appended to the official reports, also a tabular statement according to the form required by the West Suffolk County Council.

J. SINCLAIR HOLDEN, M.D.

Medical Officer of Health.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1903.

	Acton	Alpheton	Assington	Boxted	Bures St Mary	Cavendish	Chilton	Great Cornard	Little Cornard	Hartest	Hawkedon	Lawshall	Leavenheath	Melford	Nayland with Wissington	Newton	Shimpling	Somerton	Stanstead	Stoke-by-Nayland	Great Waldingfield	Little Waldingfield	TOTAL.
Complaints Received	1	...	...	...	1	1	...	3	...	...	...	...	2	1	2	...	1	1	...	4	1	1	19
Nuisances Detected	5	1	3	...	19	21	...	34	5	3	...	18	7	12	34	8	3	2	1	48	12	7	243
Nuisances abated after Notice served	3	1	1	...	18	18	...	27	3	2	...	11	6	4	23	7	1	...	1	20	10	4	160
Nuisances abated without Notice	2	...	2	...	1	3	...	7	2	1	...	7	1	8	11	1	2	2	...	26	2	3	81
Slaughter Houses Inspected	...	...	1	...	2	4	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	4	2	...	...	...	...	1	2	1	19
Dairies and Cowsheds Inspected	1	...	2	1	2	4	...	2	1	2	...	2	...	6	1	1	2	1	3	2	1	1	35
Houses Newly Erected	...	...	2	...	...	1	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	9
Houses Disinfected	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	4	1	...	...	...	...	1	1	1	...	...	...	1	1	...	11
Houses Reported Unfit for Habitation	...	...	1	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	6
Houses Closed	...	...	1	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	6
Houses Pulled Down	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	4
Filthy Houses Cleansed	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	2
Premises Repaired	2	...	...	...	3	1	...	10	...	...	...	1	...	...	2	1	...	...	...	4	2	...	26
Premises Overcrowded Abated	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	4
Wells (New or Improved Supplies)	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5
Wells (Cleaned out, deepened, &c.)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	2	...	...	1	2	...	...	8
Samples of Water taken	1	...	...	...	3	1	...	4	...	...	...	3	...	7	...	...	2	...	1	2	2	1	27
Privies (New)	...	...	...	...	3	1	...	3	...	...	...	2	3	...	4	...	...	...	...	9	3	2	30
Privies (Repaired)	1	1	2	...	3	2	...	8	3	2	...	4	1	3	7	2	...	1	...	12	2	3	57
Manure Pits, Urinals (New)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	3	...	...	...	...	2	...	1	7
Sewers (Repaired)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Sink Pipes, down spouts disconnected	...	...	...	...	2	3	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	12
Drains (New)	...	...	...	...	1	3	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	2	1	...	11
Drains (Improved)	...	...	...	...	6	3	...	6	1	1	...	3	1	1	3	1	...	...	...	6	...	...	32
Ditches cleaned out	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	6
Animals improperly kept removed	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	2	...	...	3	2	...	...	...	1	...	...	10
Offensive accumulations removed	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	3	...	...	...	3	1	1	3	...	...	...	...	7	1	1	22
Workshops Inspected	1	1	1	...	3	1	...	2	...	2	...	2	...	10	5	...	1	...	...	1	1	...	31
Bakehouses Inspected	1	...	1	...	3	3	...	1	5	...	...	1	8	...	3	1	...	...	...	1	...	1	29
Workshops Reported to Factory Inspector	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Workshops. Nuisances Abated	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	3
Outworkers visited	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	13	...	10	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	28
Outworkers reported to other Authorities	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4

FRANK HIGGINSON,
Inspector of Nuisances.

